



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

For immediate release: Aug. 5, 2004 (04-58)

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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WSDA receives grant for potato and shellfish growers

OLYMPIA – The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has received two grants, totaling \$120,000, for marketing projects for the state's potato and shellfish industries.

The grants are from the U S Department of Agriculture's Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) and represent the largest chunk of those dollars doled out to states.

Of the funds, \$70,000 will be used to assist marketing of "chipping potatoes" in Asia. The Pacific Northwest comprises one of the world's largest potato growing regions, with "chipping potatoes" being those varieties grown specifically for processing into snack foods. The snack food industries in South Korea, Taiwan, China and Thailand provide growers an excellent opportunity for market expansion as they are major consumers of potato-based snack foods.

The FSMIP grant will be matched by cash and in-kind contributions from potato commissions and departments of agriculture in Washington, Oregon and Idaho. The funding will enable the industry to provide the technical education demanded by Korean, Taiwanese, Chinese and Thai processors, and to explore the potential for growing potatoes specifically for these niche markets.

The other \$50,000 will be used by the Pacific Coast Shellfish Growers Association (PSCGA) to develop branding standards that will allow Washington shellfish to be marketed domestically and internationally as a product that is sustainably produced, intensively managed and worth a premium price. Using these funds, the PSCGA and growers will produce a business plan for launching a branding program featuring quality standards, cooperative marketing strategies, and consumer education.

"These grants will help us connect with buyers looking for the same quality they already find in our apples, pears, wine and other specialty crops," said WSDA Director Valoria Loveland. "It is imperative that we continue to strengthen our international markets. The global demands for our products help sustain farmers and communities throughout the state."

Meg VanSchoorl, WSDA Senior International Marketing Specialist, said WSDA's partnership with federal agencies is critical to supporting the state's agricultural communities.

"Thanks to this financial partnership with USDA, we can help key agricultural industries in our state carry out their high priority marketing projects" VanSchoorl said. "We have a track record of putting these funds to good use and achieving concrete results."

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